

No change in our policy on Palestine, says India

A day after U.S. President Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, India maintained a cautious stance saying its policy on Palestine is independent and not determined by any “third country”. India’s response to Mr. Trump’s statement came even as the Palestinian Ambassador to India declared that his country is likely to host Prime Minister Narendra Modi in near future.

“India’s position on Palestine is independent and consistent. It is shaped by our views and interests and not determined by any third country,” said the official spokesperson in a statement to the media here. India has traditionally supported an independent Palestine as part of a two-state solution. The statement however did not specifically address the issue of Jerusalem as the U.S.-recognised capital of Israel.

Mr. Trump’s statement came a week after India expressed support for “independent and viable Palestine” and participated in the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

In a message on that occasion Mr. Modi had said, “We hope for early realisation of a sovereign, independent, united and viable Palestine.”

India’s recent official comments have mostly avoided a mention of Jerusalem.

However, Mr. Modi ahead of his July visit to Israel had indicated that India would decide on Israeli claims on the holy city after the two sides come to a consensus.

“India supports all efforts to find an acceptable solution to all the pending issues including Jerusalem. I assume the question refers to our embassy in Tel Aviv. We will take a decision on that after both sides have come to an agreement on Jerusalem,” Mr. Modi had told Israelhayom, an online publication in an interview. He however did not answer if India would shift its embassy to Jerusalem in future.

Envoy ‘satisfied’

Presenting his country’s view, Palestinian envoy to India Adnan Abu Alhaija indicated to *The Hindu* that he is satisfied with India’s response to Mr. Trump’s announcement and said: “India has reiterated its support to the pre-1967-war border of Palestine which obviously includes the East Jerusalem and its holy places of worship and God willing, we will soon be welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Palestine.”

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